

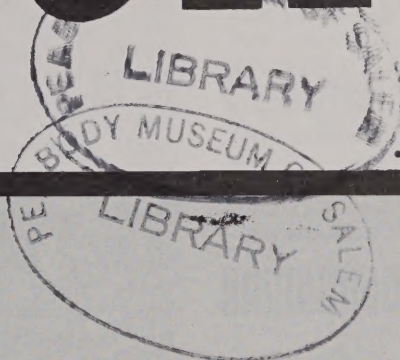


# **messing about in BOATS**

*Twice a Month!*

*Volume 6 - Number 2*

*June 1, 1988*







## messing about in BOATS

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PUBLISHER & EDITOR: BOB HICKS

# Commentary

**BOB  
HICKS**

At best, I could probably be regarded as only a casually concerned environmentalist, because my involvement in small boats has brought to my immediate attention the subject of water pollution. Despite the incessant media blitz about all the ways we are collectively disrupting and polluting our environment, I've tended to accept the fact that the press of humanity living in such masses in such small geographical areas and consuming so extravagantly natural and man-made materials renders realistic major changes in our impact on nature unlikely. When the government gets involved, as in these toxic waste site cleanups, what impresses me is the size of the contracts handed out for the cleanups, half a million dollars to lug off a few hundred leaking 55 gallon drums of something bad, and truck away the soil into which it has seeped.

This is not to deny the seriousness of what we're doing, but I'm a bit of a skeptic about our collective attitude enabling us to achieve anything really significant. The public seems to want to continue to consume at a fierce pace and the resulting trash, in all forms, solid, liquid, gaseous, has to go somewhere. The public seems happy enough if it's out of sight and out of mind.

So, when I run into people like Denny Alsop, who believes so strongly that our water quality is imperilled, that he undertakes a "demonstration" to call public attention to it, I'm impressed. While I cannot yet work up the level of believing that I can really affect conditions, I admire those who truly so believe and act upon their beliefs. Denny's story is in this issue, mostly as a tale of a small boat adventure, as that is what this magazine is all about.

While Denny impressed me, as do people like Garrett and Alexandra Conover of Northwoods Ways, who came all the way down to Boston from northern Maine to support Denny, I was not much impressed with the support Denny's effort got the final day on Boston's Charles River. A few dozen canoeists did turn out, to their credit. But there are a lot more of them than that in the greater Boston area. An example of what I mean about public attitudes; on the very next day after Denny completed his saga on behalf

of better river water quality, over one-thousand canoeists gathered on that very same Charles River to indulge in an annual event known as the "Run of the Charles". This is a race. For some a lark, for others dead in earnest.

This race is run by an organization known as the Charles River Watershed Association. It's focus and purpose has been to improve the water quality of the Charles River, to bring back its recreational values and opportunities. They have made obvious progress, the river is indeed cleaner than it has been. While swimming is still pretty much out of the question, small boating is certainly more pleasant. The "Run of the Charles" is intended to illustrate this return of recreational values to the river.

I can only assume that all these canoe people were so wrapped up in the impending big race that few, if any, could trouble to join Denny on that final couple of hours of leisurely paddling from Watertown to the Esplanade. They weren't there! On the river they use and apparently value. Had Denny been accompanied by several hundred, or a thousand, canoes instead a couple of dozen, he'd certainly have attracted a lot more attention to his message. Once the Charles hosted several thousand canoes on any Sunday, back at the turn of the century.

As a small boat nut I have become more aware of water quality, being right down there inches from it, you get to see and smell what's in the water. You see the trash lining the bankings much more readily at a leisurely pace. I don't like it either, and I applaud the concept of doing something to improve things. But, when as a relatively uninvolved user of the Charles River, I see virtually no turnout of those who are involved, I continue to be skeptical that we really will do anything serious about all our environmental problems.

I hope I'm wrong, for my children's sake. In the meantime, Denny Alsop and those like him carrying on their lonesome crusades remain people I admire and am mystified by. How can they really believe they will have any impact? I'd love to recapture some of that ability to believe, I really would.

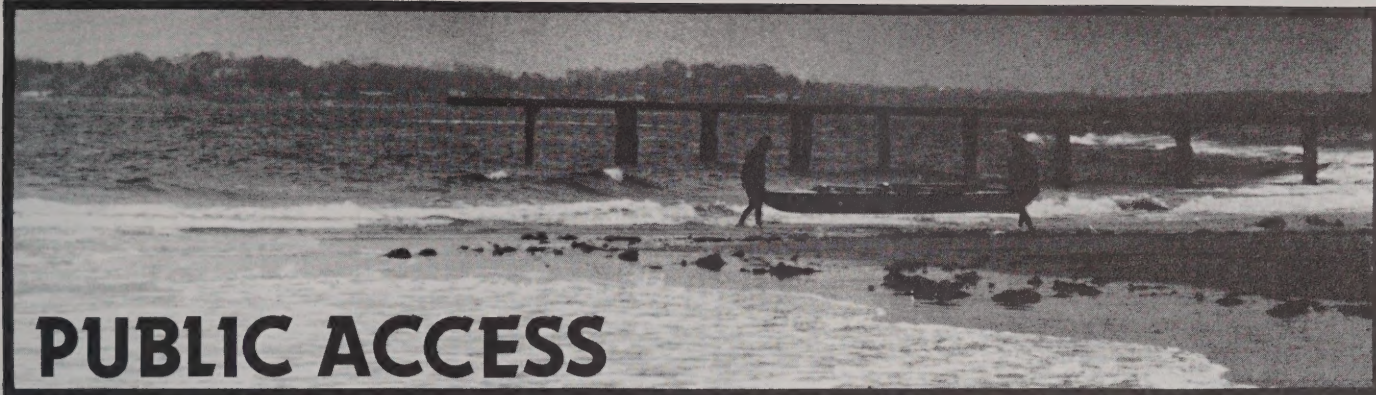
## Our Next Issue...

Will highlight a couple of interesting boat launchings, pomp and ceremony at Rockport, ME, and an old fashioned splashing at Essex, MA; a look at a "you can canoe" trout afternoon; the report on how miserable the Misery Island race was this year; the details on Weston Farmer's nice inboard launch, ASSASIN; a try at explaining how to sail a polynesian outrigger canoe; the story on the old Bob Bartlett schooner ERNESTINA, nee' EFFIE M. MORRISSEY, and her nostalgia cruise to Newfoundland this coming August; some comments on why the Dutch "botter" is the way it is. That seems like enough.

## On the Cover...

The last mile of Denny Alsop's month-long sojourn across Massachusetts by canoe was under the towers of Greater Boston along the Charles River Basin. The story's in this issue.





## PUBLIC ACCESS

### WHAT HAPPENED AT GATEWAY

Last year in response to complaints from greater New York city area paddlers, the National Park Service organized a thoroughgoing review of the potential for car top boat launching from the Gateway National Recreation Area. While the government wheels turned ponderously, they did turn, and out of this came a program offering two car top boat launching sites within Gateway boundaries. One is at Miller Field on Raritan Bay in Staten Island, the other at Floyd Bennett Field on Jamaica Bay in Brooklyn. These are free parking and launching areas.

Park Superintendent Robert McIntosh, Jr. recently informed us that despite all of this effort to accommodate a public demand, only a few boaters subsequently responded to the program. Naturally, he wonders if the interest really is out there. He thought perhaps if we reminded readers of this program, they might find it of value.

There are a number of rules and regulations involved, as is the usual case with a government arrangement. In this case, they are quite comprehensive as the waters

to which these two launching sites provide access are very busy ones with much commercial shipping and recreational powerboating activity. Concern for the safety of persons in small human powered craft is of paramount importance.

The present program is still an experiment, so if New York area paddlers really want to maintain such opportunity for access, they should avail themselves of the opportunity. The basic proviso is a permit for use. The permit is issued in person only, at Miller Field or Floyd Bennett Field, weekdays 8:30-5:00. Weekend permit issuance times can be obtained by calling (718) 338-3829 (Brooklyn) or (718) 351-8700 (Staten Island). The permit is complex, being a permit to access the water from the location, a parking permit for your car, and a wallet I.D. card. Further, a trip plan is required to be left with family or friends so should you encounter problems and people start wondering about you and call the Park Service, they have some means of following through.

I'm not going to attempt to

summarize the 12 page information and rules and regulations pamphlet, you should send for a copy for yourself if you wish to pursue this access opportunity further. Request a car top boating permit application from either of the following addresses:

Jamaica Bay District Headquarters (Hangar B), Gateway National Recreation Area, Floyd Bennett Field, Brooklyn, NY 11234.

Staten Island Unit Headquarters, Gateway National Recreation Area, Miller Field, P.O. Box 37, Staten Island, NY 10306.

Perhaps you'd rather be able to just drive on down, park, launch and go paddling or rowing without all the preliminary paperwork. But, given the apparent lack of such launching opportunities in the greater New York city area, and the Park Service's positive response to a specific request for some access on its property, you ought to take advantage of the offered access, paperwork and all. If interest isn't sufficient, the experiment could end in abandonment, and then there'd be some complaining later on.

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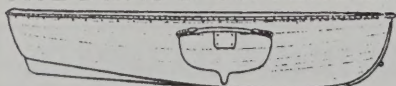
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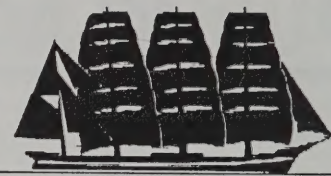
## HAPPENINGS

With the calendar filling up fast as the new on-the-water season arrives, I'm going to resume running the full calendar every other

issue, on the 15th of each month, listing the upcoming month's events. This should give ample lead time and also will release space for other news in the alternating issues on the 1st of each month. In these alternating issues I will list any NEW activities for the month that were not in the full calendar previously published.

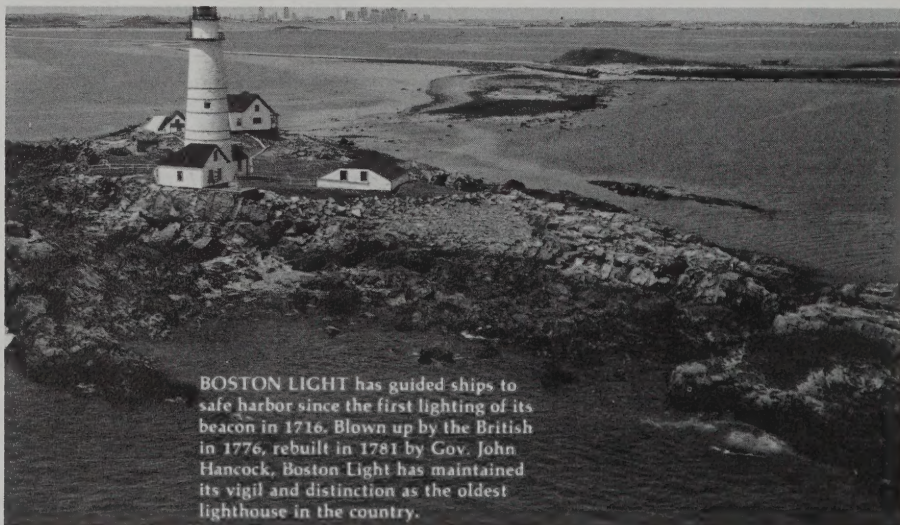
### MODEL BOATS AFLOAT

The radio controlled model boat season on the water is underway with sail racing and scale model meets underway on a weekly basis. The Minuteman Model Yacht Club has arranged for scale meets at Rocky Woods Reservation in Medfield, MA, a public reservation operated by the Trustees of Reservations. In addition to the specific events on the calendar, there will be operating scale meets Sundays, 11 a.m., at Rocky Woods through June 19th. From June 26th through September 4th, the scale boats move to Rosemary Lake in Needham. They then return to Rocky Woods September 11th through November 6th. Sail racing will go on weekly on Tuesday evenings at 6 p.m. June 21st through August 30th at Rosemary Lake in Needham. The big event for operating scale will be the Fathers' Day Invitational at Rocky Woods on June 19th. Information for operating scale from Ridge White at (617) 359-7467. For sail racing, Tom Qualtieri at (617) 329-9151.



### MOSHULU CUP RACE

Philadelphia, PA, is the site for an unusual sailing race on June 25th, as an anticipated 75 sailing vessels from 12' to over 40' will compete twice around over a 5 mile course on the Delaware River, starting and finishing by the MOSHULU, an old German square rigged grain ship converted twenty years ago into a riverfront restaurant at Penn's Landing. What's unusual is the head to head competition of modern and traditional craft on a river course with its currents and variable wind conditions. Smallest permitted size is 12', and this class (up to 16') races on its own course of about 2 miles, twice around. Another unusual feature is that no protests will be allowed. Information at (609) 966-1352 or (609) 365-9259.



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### HARBOR PHOTOS FROM ON HIGH

At the Boston Sailboat Show I was distracted by a display of big color aerial photos of our coast, harbor after harbor. Naturally I got right down to finding my own local spots. William Johnston has such photos of north shore harbors, south shore harbors, Cape Cod har-

bors and Martha's Vineyard. Prices range from \$24 for matted and mounted 8x10 size to \$550 for matted and framed 20x48 panorama shots. He'll send you the list on a nice color postcard featuring Boston Light. William Johnston, 17 Bayside Rd., Quincy, MA 02171, (617) 328-1423.





### THE WASHINGTON CANOE CLUB

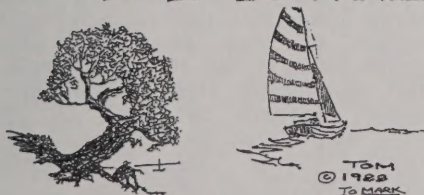
When I saw this illustration of the Washington Canoe Clubhouse on a card from that group's newsletter editor, Bob Westgate, I inquired if it was real, or just a nostalgic vision from the past. What a GREAT clubhouse, I was instantly entranced. Bob replied that it was indeed real, that it belonged to the Club and was entirely maintained by Club members, with no paid staff. Of course, this meant problems at times, like when some pipes froze this past winter forcing cancellation of a monthly crab roast.

This club is the last private canoe club in the nation's capital, and celebrated its 75th anniversary back in 1979. It's located amongst national park lands on the Potomac River near the David Taylor Model Basin, where boaters train when the river and canal freeze over.

The Club has fostered serious world class canoe paddling, with a long list of champions and Olympic paddlers, and is very active in competitive canoeing. They are currently developing a youth competition training program.

They are open year round and have in this fascinating old building three inside boat storage rooms, several outside racks, inside training/exercise room, fully equipped kitchen, heated members' lounge, locker rooms with showers for both men and women, a ballroom with a fireplace, rest rooms and a member parking area. They own several canoes, kayaks and war canoes, all available for member use. For details on joining, call (202) 333-9749 or visit them weekends or weekday evenings. They are located at 3700 Water St. NW, Washington, DC 20007.

### IN A ... DAMN FOLE TOWNIE



Townie Tom has collected together his further adventures in a Townie sloop that have appeared on our pages over the past year into a second anthology, picking up where his earlier collected works, "Adventures in a Townie" concluded. The new book contains ten adventures on its 124 pages, profusely illustrated, ranging from "Last Race of the Season" on to "The Storm". For just \$6, Tom will send you a copy to go with his earlier book, Tom McGrath, 11 Severance St., Lynn, MA 01904.

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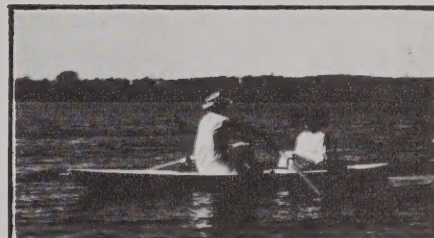
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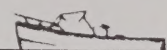
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## Boyd's Boats

Report & Photos by Bob Hicks

Boyd Mefferd is a former sculptor who gave up art seven years ago to go into the mahogany runabout and launch restoration business in the unlikely locale of Canton, CT, just outside of Hartford. In so short a time Boyd has created a truly fascinating runabout junkyard for dreamers along with a growing restoration business that now employs several full time and part time craftsmen. In 1987 three dozen boats went through Boyd's shop emerging in varying stages of restoration for their owners.

Top photo: Perhaps a "campground" for old runabouts?  
Bottom photo: Boyd brings in the latest addition.

I had occasion at last to visit Boyd, he'd invited me to do so several years ago, but going to Hartford... Anyway, a friend had to deliver two mahogany runabouts to Boyd's for the man who'd bought them both, where they'd come under Boyd's ministrations. To save him having to make two of the 250 mile round trips, consuming two scarce Sundays off from work, I volunteered to haul the 17' Chris Craft barrel stern on my trailer. We had a nice entourage, Dave's parents, Bill and Barbara, leading in Bill's immaculate '79 Ford pickup hauling

the 20' Chris Craft Cadet, Jane and I following Bill in our van with the Barrel stern, Dave, Karen and their two sons completing the group in their gorgeous '68 Buick Wildcat.

I have a hopeless addiction to old boatyards and all their cast away dreams and Boyd's did not disappoint me. Boyd built his shop/home on a piece of industrial land on the banks of the Farmington River in Canton a dozen years ago in a move out of the costly New York City artist district. Boyd's sculptures were, in part, large industrial looking affairs, a couple of them adorn the pine grove amongst the 100 or so boats, tall rectangular steel framed "windows", perhaps 30' high by 10' wide with tinted glass panes. Icons looming over this "elephant's graveyard" of old mahogany.

An enduring fantasy of adventure tales in my youth was that of the "elephants' graveyards" in Africa where old elephants supposedly went to die and their ivory tusks piled up awaiting the treasure hunter's arrival. Boyd's boatyard is just such a dream come true for those in search of old mahogany runabouts and launches, or parts thereof. About half the boats there are Boyd's, he buys them from all over the country. The others are clients' boats, some undergoing work in stages, others still waiting





their turns, or owners acquiring funds sufficient to proceed. A few oddballs lurk in the pine grove, big plywood cabin cruisers, small open daysailers, one modern fiberglass keelboat. But Boyd specializes in runabouts and launches. He doesn't do Century boats, otherwise almost any mahogany craft is of interest.

A number of partly restored boats just removed from inside winter storage are tucked amongst the weathered, splintered derelicts full of pine needles, old hardware and engines, tattered upholstery, etc. just as they were found. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder and someone found it in each of these "dreamboats", or Boyd knew he'd find someone who would. Like a really weathered Hacker, oh my, that boat's wood was dessicated, not just faded but eroded! For \$5,000 it's yours. So much? Sure, it's all there, all the key fittings, hardware, correct engine and drive train, instruments, etc. The wood'll all have to be replaced, but it's only mahogany.

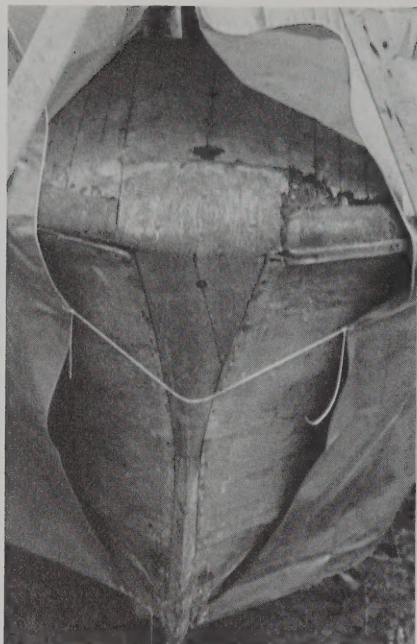
Boyd's shop is equipped to do it all, woodworking, refinishing, metalworking, mechanical work. It's chock-a-block full of everything you ever would need, not one of your neat antiseptic laboratory places, but in its way a typical cluttered boatshop. Runabouts and launches, with their combining of wooden craft and metal machinery, add the clutter of the latter to that of the former found in most boat-building shops. Out of this shop come some very nicely restored boats, total or partial. Boyd will work with an owner who wants to do some of it himself, despite the potential for an owner botching of the finished result reflecting unfavorably on Boyd's workmanship.

Boyd originally built his place for his large sculptures, but it's now seven years that he's been doing the antique boats. He says he still finds the business of unending interest, "you never know from week to week what's going to happen," he says. While ongoing projects progress, not always at the desired pace, new opportunities arrive out of the blue. Boyd solicits people to spot boats he might want by offering finder's fees on boats located that he subsequently buys. He buys the rarer stuff, often not

From the top: Work in progress in the shop, four boats well along the restoration road, a nice barrel-stern at left. BLUE RIBBON in splendid red, white and blue decor, is a former Pabst Beer racing runabout, it's in perfect shape. JAWS, perhaps, someone's idea of appropriate runabout styling. Boyd sets the 20' Chris Craft Cadet our friend delivered into its resting place amongst the pines. Not its "final" resting place, the new owner has big plans for the boat.







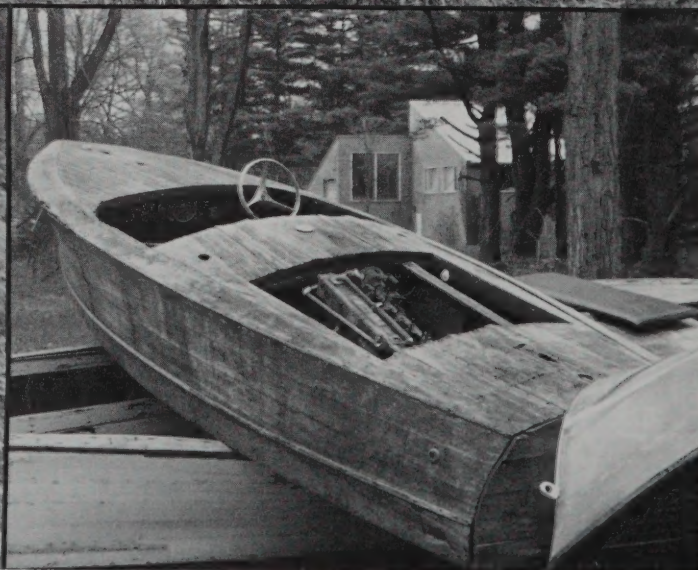
in very good shape (like that Hacker,) but of proven desirability and having potential for restoration.

On the selling side, Boyd will sell you a whole boat or pieces thereof for one you already have. He's got old semi-trailers parked out back full of engines and hardware removed from hulks. Other "hulks" await final disposition, which is the bonfire, stacked one atop another at the far end of the lot in a clearing. To my uneducated eye, some of these looked no worse than others still retained for possible resurrection. But, again, Boyd knows what is and isn't worth troubling with. He's an interesting character blend of congenial and imaginative artist and no-nonsense businessman. While he smiles easily and talks comfortably about any aspect of what he's doing, he also can decisively say "no" in a tone that implies no reconsideration. Overwhelmed somewhat in 1987, Boyd says he's really been saying

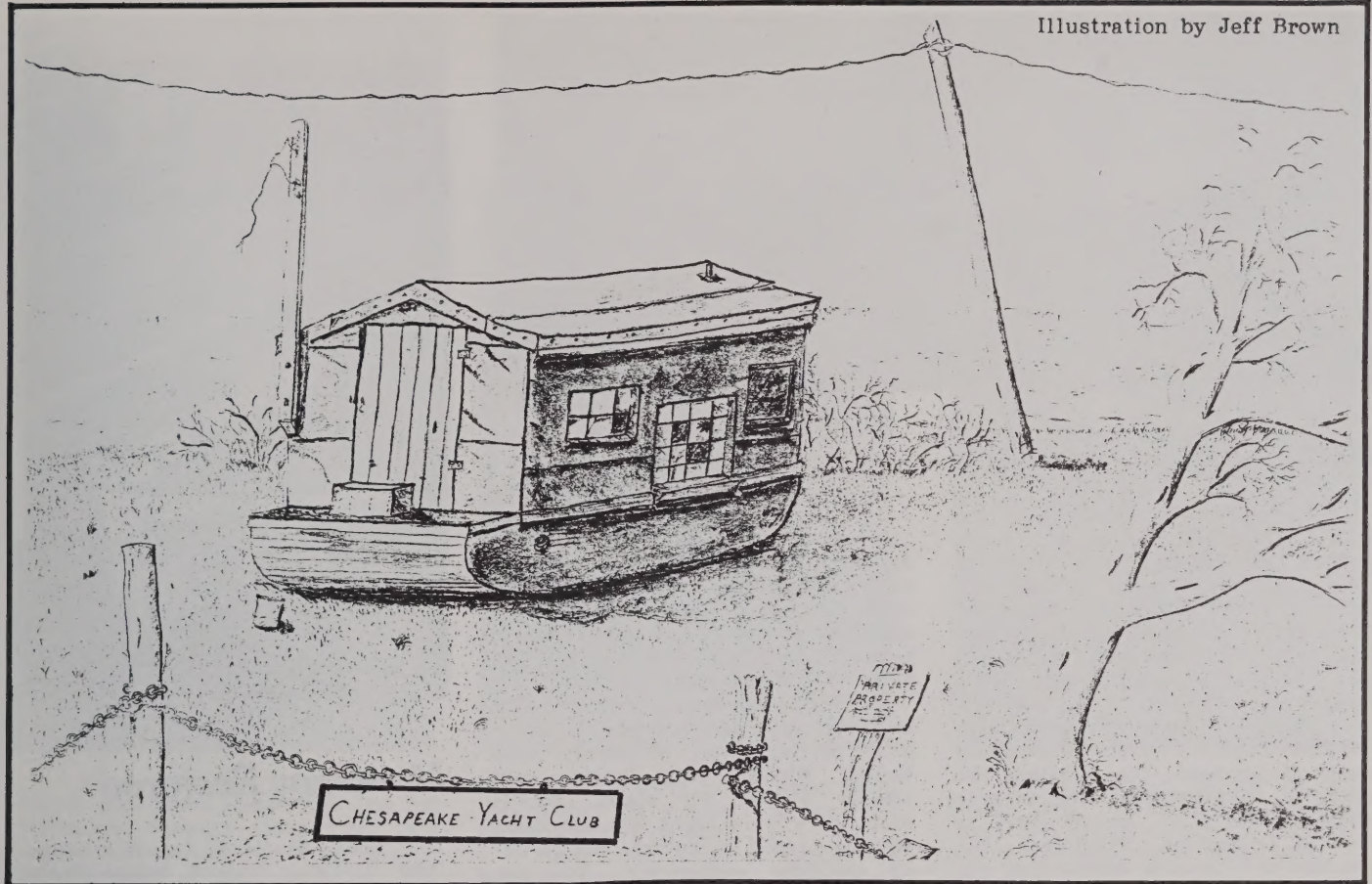
"no" a lot since in an effort to get his commitments back into line with his capabilities in terms of time available.

I asked Boyd what he did for recreation and he replied, "work here seven days a week." Since he lives at the shop in an upstairs apartment with his family, he's right where he wants to be all the time. Except when travelling to certain meets and auctions, or to view potential purchases or restoration projects. While the pressures of satisfying commitments to clients on restoration jobs can weigh heavily, there's always the excitement of the unknown about to happen. And the "elephants' graveyard" all around with all its failed past dreams awaiting discovery by a modern day "treasure hunter" on the prowl for that dream mahogany runabout. Nostalgia is Boyd's trade and he's got the goods...and services. Interested? Contact Boyd Mefferd at P.O. Box 9, Canton, CT 06019,

Above left: Not yet in the burning pile, this snub nosed runabout peeks hopefully out in search of salvation. Below: End of the trail for someones' dreams. MY FAIR LADY isn't anymore, sad... The brush encroaching on a stray derelict. Perched jauntily on top of the heap, this runabout nevertheless will soon be ashes.







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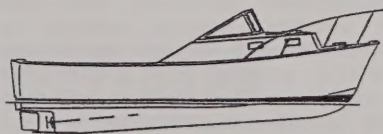
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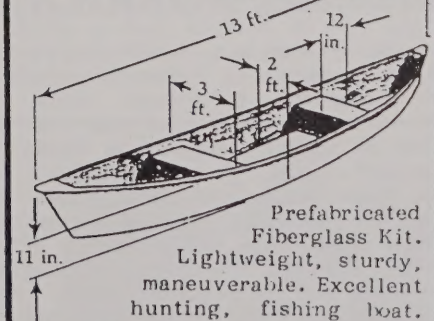
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## Here's VICTORIA!

Jim Thayer of Mechanicsville, VA, builder of traditional design pulling and sailing boat hulls in fiberglass, just sent us his announcement of his latest creation, "Victoria", a traditional launch hull with wineglass transom. In his own inimitable way, here's Jim's ballyhoo.

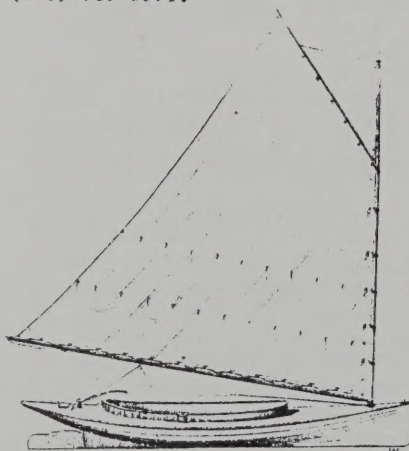
"Here's a news release of momentous import. Thayer & Company today announced that, after two years of development, the eagerly awaited "Victoria" launch hull is now in production. "Victoria" is a product of intensive research at the Brooklyn Navy Yard with additional tweaking by the Thayer & Co. R&D department. According to Jim Thayer, company spokesman, the new hull promises to be incredibly fast.

"Victoria" will be ideal for small steam or internal combustion engines. She can also be finished out as a surpassingly beautiful sailboat with oval coaming and in-board rudder, as in the illustration.

The first hull was snatched, still hot from the mold, by Mr. Charles Roth of Glen Gardner, NJ. Hearing rumors of the breathtakingly beautiful hull, he came, he saw, and he loaded it onto his van. Up until now, Charlie has been heavily into model radio control steamboats. "Victoria" will be his first full size steamer.

The "Victoria" hull is 15'8"x4'4". Midships depth is 19". She is all hand-laid with high density nonwoven fabrics stiffened with Coremat. Special stiffening is supplied in way of the engine beds. Introductory price is just \$695, FOB Mechanicsville, VA."

"Victoria" resulted from earlier steamboat adaptations of Thayer's pulling boat Whitehall type hulls. While these hulls were ideally shaped for steam propulsion, they were tight fits for steam equipment and operators, not to even consider passengers. You can contact Jim Thayer at 2106 Atlee Rd., Mechanicsville, VA 23111, (804) 746-0674.



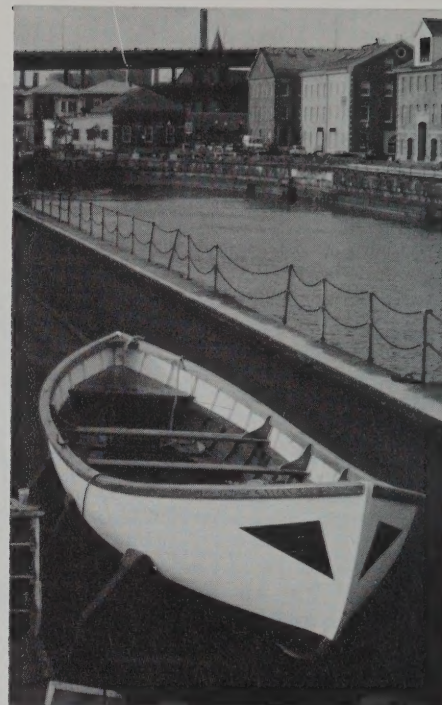
## Rebuilding HURRICANE

Mark Ruggiero of Rockport, MA, is undertaking restoration of a 40' Concordia pilothouse sloop, "Hurricane", a boat that was featured in its own chapter in Waldo Howland's book, "A Life in Boats - The Years Before the War". "Hurricane" is mahogany planked on oak frames and needs a fair amount of work. She is in nearly original condition and is beautiful inside.

Mark is a marine mechanic and working with wood is not his strong suit. Some of the work he faces on "Hurricane" includes replacement of ten broken ribs, decking and deck beams, and deck can-

vas, and repair of various non-structural spots of dry rot. Mark welcomes anyone wishing to see the boat and discuss her needs, especially anyone who might want to trade Mark some woodworking skills for his mechanical expertise. "Hurricane" is out of the water in Rockport.

Major funds for "Hurricane's" restoration are tied up in Mark's 34' double-ended gaff ketch, "Altair", currently advertised on our classified pages. You can contact Mark at 61 Granite St., Rockport, MA 01966, (617) 546-3565 (home) or (617) 283-2828 (work).



## Monomoy Restored

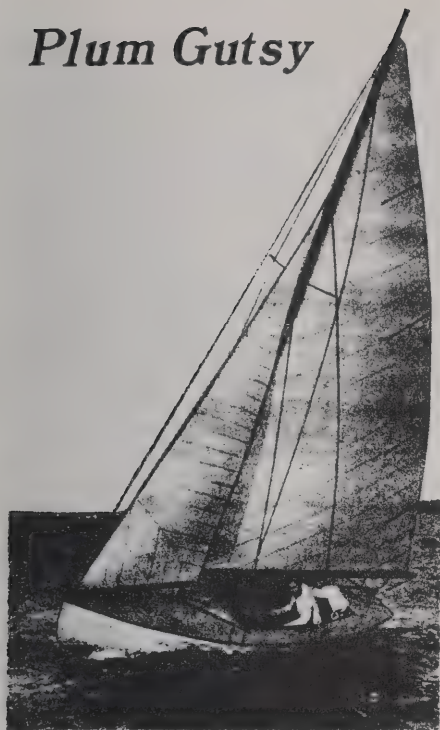
Tony Davis of the New England Historic Seaport Boston Boatshop has just completed restoration of a Monomoy lifeboat for the Massachusetts Maritime Academy in Buzzards Bay, MA. A nice job of work. Tony specializes in building and restoring traditional wooden boats at the shop, located in the old Charlestown Navy Yard adjacent to where the U.S.S. CONSTITUTION is berthed. If you have such a craft in mind, talk to Tony about it at (617) 242-1414.

## Swallows & Amazons

Frank Collins of Ayer's Cliff, Quebec, has a retirement project in mind, building himself a replica of the 14' lug rigged dinghy, "Swallow" as described and illustrated in the book, "Swallows & Amazons", one of a series of children's books from earlier in the century by the famous journalist and author, Arthur Ransome. Collins lives on an 8 mile long lake and fancies the idea of such a craft on its waters. He comments on the fact that Ransome retained a child-like viewpoint throughout his life, and while his books, such as "Swallows & Amazons", were ostensibly written for children, their continuing appeal is perhaps also to those adults who have themselves never quite deserted childhood. If you're a "Swallows & Amazons" fan, perhaps you'd like to be in touch with Frank on his dream project, Frank Collins, P.O. Box 417, Ayers Cliff, P.Q., Canada J0B 1C0.



## Plum Gutsy



The nostalgia page in the March 1st issue featuring the 18' Thompson Seagull sloop from 1936 struck a familiar chord for reader Dick Popham of West Hartford, CT. He sent on to us a true story he received last September by one sailor friend about a long ago adventure in such a Seagull sloop.

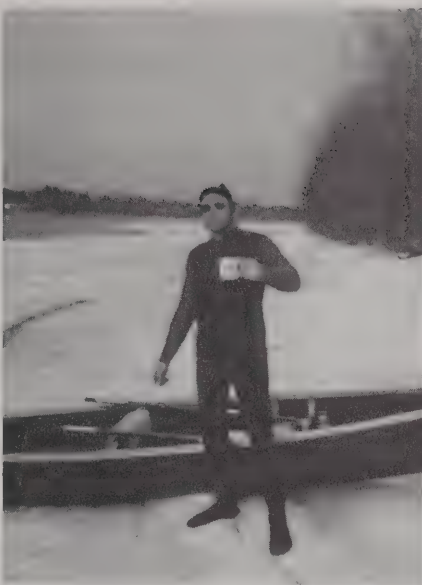
"The Seagull is the boat that a non-sailor college roommate and I took on a trip from Noroton, CT, to Newport, RI, and back, via Block Island. We left Noroton at 8 p.m. and arrived at Montauk Point at 8:24 p.m. the next evening, 130+ miles in about 24 hours. It was on the way that my crew awoke me from a sound sleep to suggest I take over because, 'something's going on here!'

I found we were being funneled through Plum Gut by a four or five knot current with a fifteen knot breeze on the starboard bow. The flashing buoy was heeled over at 45 degrees and throwing a big wake. A 28' Triton Pearson with engine screaming was trying to hold position in the current while dropping sail, not wanting to sail on through. The skipper on a big schooner was yelling at his crew to come to the rail and look at this little 18' open Seagull heading into the rip tide.

The worst were the six foot high standing waves like sawteeth. The Seagull lifted to the first three and then took about a foot of green water over the deck from the fourth. Then we were through. It was this experience that convinced me I had an extremely seaworthy craft and gave me the confidence to proceed on to Block Island and Newport.

Alan Dardsley, Captain of the Old Seagull."

## A Great Winter



Bill Howard of Springfield, MA, hasn't let winter stop him from messing about in boats.

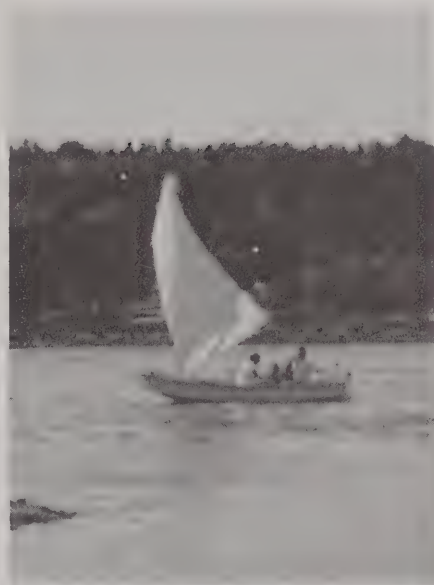
"It's been a great winter so far for messing about in boats here in Springfield on the Connecticut River. It's had great winds for excursions in my Gypsy sailboat or for paddling trips in my Coleman canoe.

My last trip I put my canoe in at Chicopee for a leisurely six mile trip down river. Winds were gusting the 25 mph and it was a nice sunny day with cool and crisp winter air. These strong winter winds make it great for surfing the canoe on waves.

Passing the riverfront park I saw nets strung out to absorb what was reported to be 3,000 gallons of diesel fuel that was draining into the river from an accident involving a fuel truck, which ruptured its tank. Fortunately, officials here were quick to act and stop the fuel from polluting the river and killing river wildlife.

I continued for another mile and saw no signs of any damage caused by this spill. I took out at the Springfield Yacht Club, ending one more great day of messing about in boats."

## Decided to Drop Us, but...



Reader Harold Taylor of Augusta, ME, had mixed emotions about his subscribing to BOATS, and expresses them very well in this note:

"Enclosed is my subscription renewal. I had decided to drop the publication, but now I miss it, shortcomings and irritations notwithstanding.

I have decided that you need a managing editor who will put a clamp on you when seven whole pages are devoted to the "Elco" or some equally meritorius design. Also, try to curb the impulse to reprint old books ad nauseam. Enough already!

So much for sour grapes. For the price the paper is still a bargain. I went so far as to have the Rockport Apprenticeshop people build me a sailing garvey based on a couple of pictures I saw in BOATS. She's beautiful, sails great, and is an absolute joy to me. TEMPO RUBATO (a musical term having to do with speed varying quite a bit) is 14'5"x5'2".

On the positive side, you are doing a real service to the small boat guy who appreciates the simple things."

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## FRIENDS OF NOBSKA

An incorporated non-profit preservation society

In the March 1st issue was a report on how the Friends of NOBSKA, after a decade of hoping, have acquired possession of the 210' steamboat once used between New Bedford, MA, and Nantucket, but now languishing at the head of Chesapeake Bay in Chesapeake City, MD, awaiting the Friends raising the \$30,000 needed to tow the ship to New Bedford. Now a synopsis of the ship's life and specs is in hand and it's rather interesting.

Facts About the Steamer NOBSKA: Built in 1925 by Bath Iron Works for the New England Steamship Company. Owned by that firm 1925-1946; by Massachusetts Steamship Lines 1946-1949; by New Bedford, Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Company 1949-1961; and by Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority 1962-1975, when it was retired from service.

Length Overall: 210'  
 Length B.P.: 202'  
 Breadth Over Guards: 50'  
 Breadth Molded: 36'  
 Depth of Hold: 14'6"  
 Draft Loaded: 9'3"  
 Gross Tonnage: 1082  
 Net Tonnage: 428  
 Service Speed: 14 Knots

Engine: 4-cylinder triple expansion reciprocating steam engine, cylinders 16", 26", 30" bores by 24" stroke, 1,200 hp (still in NOBSKA)

Boilers: Two Babcock & Wilcox watertube, originally coal fired, 200 psi.

Propellor: 8'6" Diameter

Designer: Albert F. Haas

Draftsmen: Warren T. Berry & J. Howland Gardner

NOBSKA was launched on March 24, 1925 at 12:43 p.m. and her maiden voyage was from New Bedford to Nantucket on April 9, 1925. Her first Master was James Oscar Sandsbury. Highlights of subsequent years were as follows:

1928: Name changed to NANTUCKET.

1928: Rammed pilings and was damaged by a storm.



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1929: A baby was born on board.

1931: Ran aground on Sturgeon Flats, Edgartown.

1931: Made worst crossing in 20th century steamboat history.

1932: Crashed into sistership MARTHA'S VINEYARD.

1933: Wireless installed.

1940: Converted from coal to oil.

1947: Only steamer to make a scheduled run for which no passengers, cars or freight showed up.

1950: Saloon deck sides, deckhouse, and pilot house reconstructed; freight deck enlarged by moving lunch bar and purser's office to saloon deck; reconstruction designed by Walter Bieringer.

1950: Radar installed.

1956: Named changed back to NOBSKA.

1961: Cut through 14" ice to bring supplies to isolated islanders on Nantucket.

1961: Last steamer to make a scheduled run from New Bedford to the islands.

1964: Ran aground just south of Woods Hole.

1972: Smoke detection system and sewage holding tanks installed; two of her four lifeboats replaced with rafts; four staterooms removed.

1973: Last voyage, Nantucket to Woods Hole and Vineyard Haven, September 18.

1974: Towed to Nantucket in March.

1974: Listed in National Register of Historic Places in May.

1975: Sold to Alfred Johnston for \$61,750 on June 26. Towed from Nantucket to Fall River for refurbishing.

1975: Towed from Fall River to Baltimore, MD.

1976: NOBSKA Restaurant opened April 23.

1976: FON Preservation Team visits NOBSKA for preservation work July 19.

1977: FON Preservation Team visits NOBSKA for preservation work July 12.

1978: NOBSKA Restaurant closes. FON Preservation Team visits for preservation work.

1979: NOBSKA purchased by Adam Spiegel for \$125,000. Major conversion work begun, boilers and staterooms removed.

1979-87: Half a dozen plans arise to convert NOBSKA to crab-house, dinnerhall, museum, crab-shucking business.

1987: FON begins purchase discussions with Spiegel.

1988: FON acquires NOBSKA January 8. NOBSKA moved from Pier #5 in Baltimore to Chesapeake City, MD, January 15.

And this spring NOBSKA is due back in New Bedford. For all the details on Friends of NOBSKA, 51 South St., Berlin, MA 01503. It is a non-profit steamship preservation society open to anyone interested.



# Florida Before Billboards

It started with my wish to see the Everglades. Not from an excursion aircraft. Not even from an airboat. But up close, on foot, by canoe. Guess I wanted to feel, smell, touch them. Only I was in Tampa, at least four hours away by car, my time all too short, other commitments made. Besides, I'd been told, "On the way there, all you'll see is billboards and when you get there...nothing!"

And yet, I wanted to see more than billboards, no...less than billboards. I wanted to see a bit of Florida as it might have looked before billboards. I wanted to see its trees, shrubs, birds, its soil and its water, so abundant, so fresh. Florida, while no higher than 160 feet above the sea, man-made mountains excepted, is a vast spring of fresh water surrounded by a sea of salt. So I kept on asking, "What can I do here, within an hour's drive of Ybor City, the heart of Old Tampa?"

"Ain't never tried it," said a northerner, exiled for a half score years, "but there's a canoe place up on Rte. 301 just south of Sun City, where you cross the creek that becomes the Little Manatee River."

Sure enough, it took but little scouting to find it, the Little Manatee River Canoe Outpost, 18001 U.S. 301, Wimauma, FL 33598, (813) 634-2228, where Jim said, "No reservations? Well, you're in luck, the next trip leaves in about five minutes." All it took was just under \$20, a bottle of seltzer water, a couple of apples, a piece of cheese, and our binoculars. Jim deftly man-handled the canoe onto the trailer while we clambered into the van ahead of it, and we were off.

The side road wound through farm land to a drop-off nine miles upstream, one of quite a few choices, with even overnight trips available. Our take-out would be at the Post where our car would be waiting. I mentioned how totally ignorant I was of semitropical vegetation, even familiar trees seemed unfamiliar. "With over 300 species of oak alone, I've given up trying," said our ferry-man, "but you'll see swamp maple just coming out and, of course, all kinds of birds."

We were unprepared for the mood of the creek. The deep brown, tannin-rich water... "You won't see the dwarf cypress that colors the stream, they're way upstream"...moved us swiftly while the tree canopy almost closed overhead, obscuring an already dark and threatening sky. We paddled slowly, more to steer than propel ourselves. Mostly willow lined the

sandy shores, the green so dense we rarely saw the birds twittering all around. We found it hard to look at birds while gliding onward, the current pushes bow or stern toward shore or the occasional snag. But it was easy to fend off, or hold a branch to sit quietly for a spell. Even better, plenty of sandy flats on either shore invited a pull-out, though the dense brush of vines, palmetto, willow and bushes new to me, didn't permit easy exploration or allow an inland view. A few mosquitoes arrived when we lingered, but opted against pursuit when we resumed motion.

A few of the sharper bends demanded attention, and when Barbara, the bow paddle, turned sharply to me, I expected a comment on my steering, but her look of surprise warned me of more. She saw the whole thing, but I only glimpsed the tail of a huge alligator sliding off a low sandbank into the dark adjacent pool. We were too stunned and so slipped past, visions from old Tarzan movies in our heads, before we stopped, backed, and then lay still on the opposite bank. Our silence was rewarded and a pair of eyes, quite far apart, and a bit of snout, a foot and a half away from the eyes, broke the surface. It was clear we were watched, one move, and the pool again looked like the inviting swimming hole it first appeared to be. We expected frogs and snakes on this narrow, twisting creek, but not 'gators.

With new respect, we dropped downstream, explored another spot, pitied our poor lore of birds, positively identified only a cardinal and a red-wing blackbird, while only guessing at a kingfisher, heard what surely were warbler and songsparrow, and clearly heard jays. We learned that it takes a bit of coordination to avoid snags; it's not enough to have the bow paddle push off...this invariably slams the stern, pushed by the river, into the snag, and Barbara, now stern paddle, was justly cross when just this move dumped a mess of leaf-litter and several species of spider aboard. But really, the creek is easy, anyone can do it, and the sudden downpour did not long dampen our spirits, because the sun soon had us dry again. We explored a shallow creek barefoot, watching tiny "minnows" dart ahead of us over the clean sand.

All too soon the Route 301 bridge hove into sight, three hours passed in what seemed merely minutes. We sat quietly on a sandbar, watching the water flow gently past, slowly rolling dead leaves over the sand ripples, some of which were marked by footprints of

heron or egret. We wanted to hold on to the mood of the creek, its quiet motion, its wild shores. Only two man-made structures...a bridge and a power plant intake...interrupted the profusion of lush, thick growth.

We stretched, smiled, ate an apple each, drank the bubbling seltzer, remarked on how little litter we had seen...a trash bag would allow us to pack out more and in a few trips the place would be pristine...and quickly as it began, our trip had ended. But what a difference it made in our thinking about Florida. It added much to the pleasures already felt. We saw pelicans, terns, gulls, cormorants and herons by the shore, glimpsed one shy manatee in the lower reaches of the same river, and could now add the memory of quiet moments as we might have seen nature a hundred years ago.

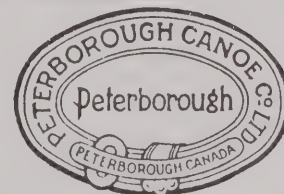
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## Denny Alsop's "Canoe for Clean Water"

Denny Alsop was scheduled to complete his 33 day paddle across the state of Massachusetts on Saturday, April 23rd, by taking out at the Hatch Memorial Shell on Boston's Charles River Esplanade. From there he was to do his last portage, a half-mile uphill to the State House, where a press conference was scheduled. Denny had undertaken this marathon paddling adventure to dramatize concern for water quality in Massachusetts rivers.

So, we found ourselves on our first on-the-water outing of the new year launching the Folbot at Cambridge's Magazine Beach, about halfway from Denny's starting point that morning at the Watertown Dam on the Charles, and his finish at the Esplanade. As Jane and I paddled upstream towards Watertown about an hour before Denny was due at Magazine Beach, I wondered about how many canoeist/environmentalist folks would turn out for this final stretch of his trip as a sort of honor guard. Would anyone come? Would hundreds come? As seems to usually be the case, nothing extreme happened. Rounding the bend under the Elliot Bridge and heading for the scheduled stop at Christian Herter Park, we met the oncoming flotilla, about two dozen canoes and kayaks. A nice manageable, comfortable group. Not

a demonstration of support one might expect, though, from people who paddle canoes on these rivers.

So we about-faced and paddled on this final four or five miles. The group included solo canoeists and several kayakers, many doubles in canoes, several mom and pop and a couple of kids canoe crews, and a war canoe carrying several paddlers and the TV cameraman, who periodically would stand up and shoot the action.

Denny was smiling and paddling easily along in his home built stripper canoe emblazoned with sponsor Massachusetts Audubon Society's name and the signatures of a bunch of grammar school kids who had seen him off on March 21st on the Green River in the town of Alford on the New York state line. At the Esplanade, a small crowd had gathered to greet him, and in no time, Denny had his canoe out of the water, and led the assembled multitude off up to the State House, all packing plastic gallon jugs of water symbolizing the issue of water quality. We didn't go along, press conferences are tiresome things with our mass media Barbies and Kens asking their questions.

Why did Denny do this? Who is he? He did it because he's philosophically concerned about water pollution. He builds nice stripper ca-

noes of his own design as a hobby and paddles for recreation. (He's a forester professionally). Denny built a canoe for Rob Perkins to use last summer on a 700 mile solo paddle down northwest Canada's wild and lonesome Back River from near Great Slave Lake to the Arctic Ocean (that's a story I'd like to bring you sometime soon!). Denny lives in Stockbridge in the southwestern corner of the state. He acquired the sponsorship of the Massachusetts Audubon Society for his vision of paddling entirely across the state, as water quality is, of course, a hot environmental issue with Audubon folks.

Denny planned his route initially from ordinary highway road maps. He'd never paddled on any of the rivers involved aside from his local Housatonic. From these basic maps, not all that accurate, he graduated to a Fish & Game Dept. map of watersheds of the state showing all the streams and their relationships. From this he could more accurately plan the most logical route to minimize portages. The final map he carried along was a plastic relief map the U.S. Geological Survey produces that shows the topography of the state in exaggerated vertical scale with all the streams noted. Not only was this visually helpful but the plastic was impervious to water and on its back Denny made all necessary notes in indelible pen. His route is illustrated on the centerspread pages which follow, with the rivers used named in sequence and direction taken on each.

Well, what did he find about water quality? He found he couldn't drink the water, not surprising where people have lived and polluted for almost 400 years. He found the "generic" trash item to be the cast away shopping cart. These were everywhere that a bridge or overpass or abutment provided opportunity for casting one over the



A family support group enjoying the outing.



edge. Denny says he got to fantasizing about why people seem to sieze upon the shopping cart for this gesture. At first he viewed it as defiance, a sort of "to hell with society" gesture. Later he came to conclude that it was more a gesture of despair, still a sort of "to hell with society" gesture, but from a more hopeless viewpoint. Whatever the philosophical viewpoints held by those trashing them, shopping carts were the most universal trash.

What was the worst he encountered in pollution? Right off near Lee on the Housatonic he ran into the "blue water" from a local factory dumping its die lot surplus and waste into the river. Much further east, well into the eastern part of the state, he found stretches of the Assabet River in Hudson and Maynard to be particularly foul. He was particularly taken by the contrast downstream from Maynard where the river entered Concord, home of Thoreau and many who are currently fashionable environmentalists. He wondered how much the Concord folks knew of what was happening a few miles upstream.

Denny made the entire trip "on the trail", he never went home in the 33 days, camped out overnight in tent and sleeping bag despite many offers of shelter enroute. He says at first he planned to be a real purist and go it alone all the way, but he succumbed to those who wanted so much to give him a boost that he accepted offers

of showers and meals. In the early days coming over the height of land from the head of the Housatonic to the head of the eastward flowing Westfield River in Becket, he ran into ice where he dragged the canoe over ice pans from water to water.

There were four major portages. Denny paddled as far up each stream as was possible before heading overland. First portage was the aforementioned one from the Housatonic to the Westfield, the 8 miles or so of packing done three times in two trips to bring canoe and gear. Next came an 11 mile hike from the Ware River over to East Wachusett Brook, this one he did once as friends packed along the gear. Third was from Wachusett Reservoir to the Assabet River. The final portage was an easy hike down a road from the Sudbury to the Charles. Denny took the most obvious routes on each portage, roads, powerline swaths, trails. He hiked about 100 miles with the back and forth stuff required.

Denny ran into plenty of natural obstacles on upstream portions, fallen trees, alder thickets, beaver dams, that sort of thing. He says he designed the nearly flat sheer into his canoe to enable it to more easily pass beneath fallen trees. Upstream sections often were strenuous, when paddling was no longer effective, he'd pole. Early along on the Housatonic, heavy rains melted the winter snow pack and the river rose four feet over-

night. This rendered some stretches not only impassable from the viewpoint of the fighting the fast running current, but also from a safety viewpoint. So he'd get out and hike past the worst of them.

Within the simplicity of his gear lurked hi technology. Since the purpose was to dramatize the water quality, requiring that he maintain contact with the news media, Denny had a cellular phone onboard. Area newspeople could call him up along the way and ask him, "how's it going, Denny?" He made a number of stops at various communities where local environmentalists and politicians turned out for press conferences. So, it was not exactly a lonely quest.

Did it help his cause? Who can tell? Boston TV picked it up for brief mention on the commercial channels, public TV's Channel 2 gave him a lot more in-depth coverage. A State House press conference on a Saturday meant the pols were not home. And the State House steps are where everyone with a cause ends up speaking out, so this canoe guy with his bottle of water wasn't going to create a stir. It certainly didn't hurt the cause of water quality, of course, and Denny Alsop had quite an adventure in paddling and in human relations. Now he's talking about paddling off to this summer's Democratic National Convention, in Atlanta, I think. That's a fur piece to paddle. We'll keep in touch if it happens.

Top left: A kayaker takes a close look at Charles River water quality. Below left: Denny takes out for the final time in 33 days. Top right: The Charles River Basin is rather scenic in an urban way. Bottom right: Maine environmentalist/canoeists Alexandra (center) and Garret (right) Conover came a long way to support Denny's effort.





DENNY'S ROUTE

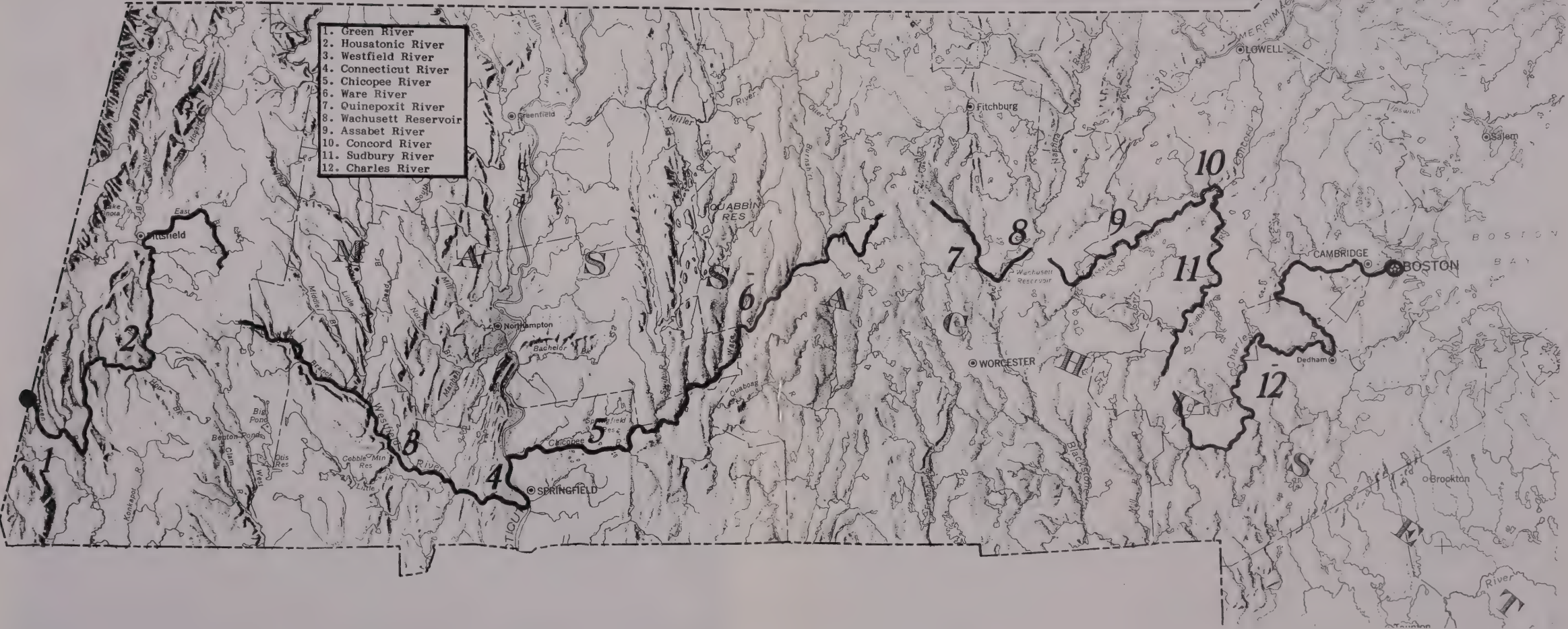
Denny began in Alford on the New York state line on the Green River. He travelled downstream to the Housatonic, turning then upstream to Pittsfield and beyond. Then came the portage over the height of land in the Berkshire Hills to the headwaters of the Westfield River in Becket. Here he headed downstream again to the Connecticut. Turning north, upstream, he paddled past Springfield, site of a major press conference, then turned upstream on the Chicopee River. This led to the Ware River, another upstream paddle to its headwaters. The portage

here was over to East Wachusett Brook, down which he paddled to the Quinepoxit River and thence into the Wachusett Reservoir, a main Boston water supply facility, where there was another major press conference at Clinton. Another portage from here led to the Assabet River which he followed downstream to the Concord, down which he then travelled a very short distance before turning upstream on the Sudbury River. At the headwaters of this river, he portaged over to the headwaters of the Charles River, and then it was all downstream to the sea at Boston.

Denny was liking it on his final day.



The last portage, off to the State House.











# Escapade

## A Jaunty Motor Cruiser

25-foot LOR, 7-foot 4-inch Beam

2-foot 6-inch Draft

Power: 18 HP Volvo 2002

# Egressus

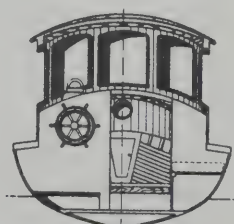
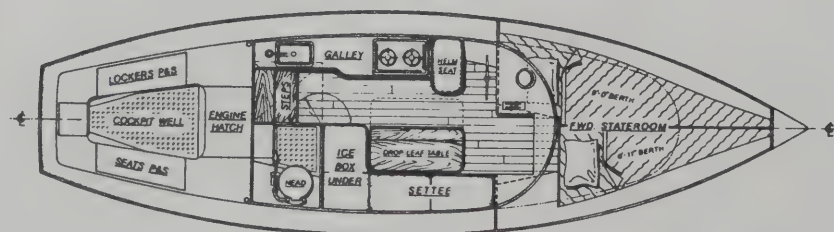
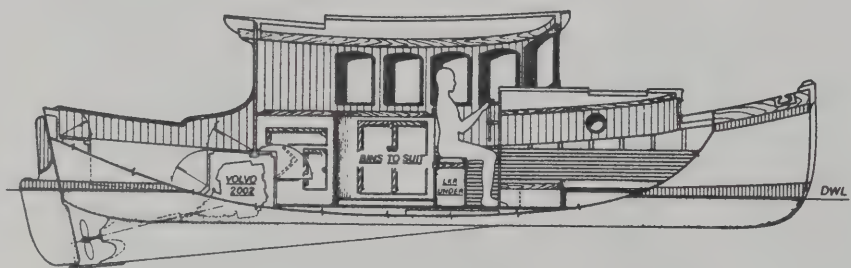
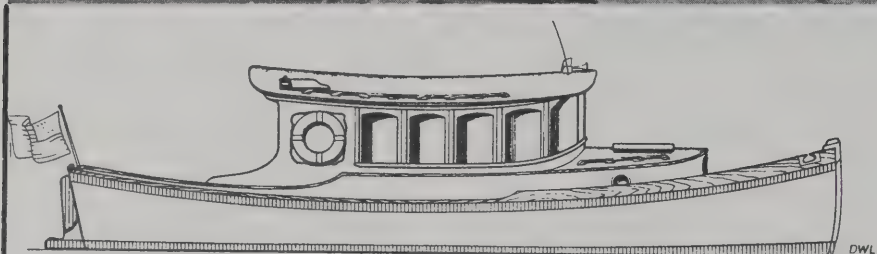
## A Salty Motorsailer

25-foot LOR, 7-foot 4-inch Beam

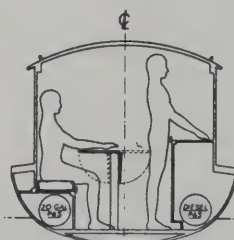
2-foot 9-inch Draft

Power: 18 HP Volvo 2002

Sail Area: 255 sq.ft.



STATION 6  
LOOKING FORWARD



STATION 8  
LOOKING AFT

The allure of the old style turn-of-the-century motor yacht is not yet dead, and naval architect Dave Gerr of New York city recently responded to an inquiry into designing such a craft, in a smaller size than one might envision being necessary for such spaciousness and elegance, with his ESCAPADE, a 25 footer styled after those old craft, on a hull that is a modified Whitehall type. Dave's creation is powered with an 18hp Volvo diesel which drives the narrow (7'4" beam) hull easily at up to 8 knots on a few pints of fuel per hour.

The original design order came from a builder who was subsequently unable to complete the building of the boat. Dave turned to his frequent collaborators in building his wooden boat designs, North River Boatworks of Albany, NY. They undertook completion of ESCAPADE and as a result are now offering to build the boat to order. Dave carried the design a step further by altering it into an alternative motor sailer type, with 255 square feet of sail yawl rigged. The same hull has an added half-ton of lead ballast adding 3" to the 2'6" draft.

Dave uses adjectives like "salty" and "jaunty" in his literature, and they seem to capture the appearance of the boats. If your powerboat is going to be slow and comfortable, it ought to look elegant. The comfort is ample in a 25 footer, the main cabin has a full six foot headroom over a ten foot length. All the windows open if desired. There's an enclosed stand-up shower and head is aft on the starboard side. The inside helm station is forward on the port side. The motor sailer has an added helm on the rear cabin bulkhead in the 6'6" long open cockpit aft. Forward of the main cabin is a private enclosed stateroom with a huge 9' long V-berth.

The Volvo is under the cockpit bridge deck, accessible by removing the enclosure with a few latches. It drives a 16" prop

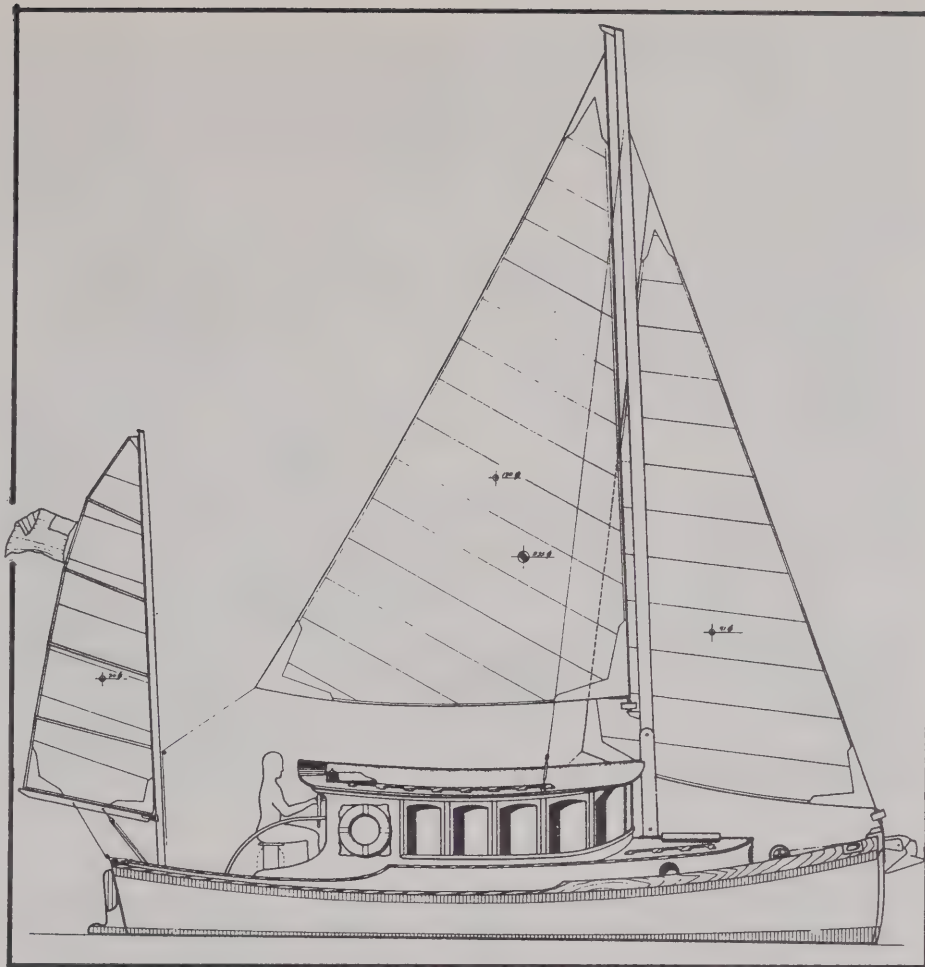


through a 2.4:1 reduction for plenty of low rpm thrust. The prop is protected by a substantial skeg. The sail rig on the motorsailer has a fully battened mizzen that can be left up as a steering and stabilizing sail if motoring. Both spars can be dropped easily for low bridges, even without unfurling the sails. The main and jib are roller furling, and all lines lead to the cockpit for ease of handling with a small crew or no crew.

North River will build either model in cedar strip plank, epoxy glued and sealed, with xynole polyester and glass cloth sheathing. The decks, cabin and interior are all of wood, all epoxy glued, saturated, and sealed. They are set up to build either ESCAPE or EGRESSUS as production craft, but also will manufacture a bare hull for a home builder to finish out, at a very reasonable price. Anyone wanting to scratch build either boat can do so with the detailed building plans available from Gerr Marine.

For further details, study plans, etc. or building plans, Gerr Marine, Inc., 420 E. 79th St. Suite 4B, New York, NY 10021, (212) 570-6750.

For information on having either boat built, or for a bare hull, North River Boatworks, Inc., 6 Elm St., Albany, NY 12202, (518) 434-4414.



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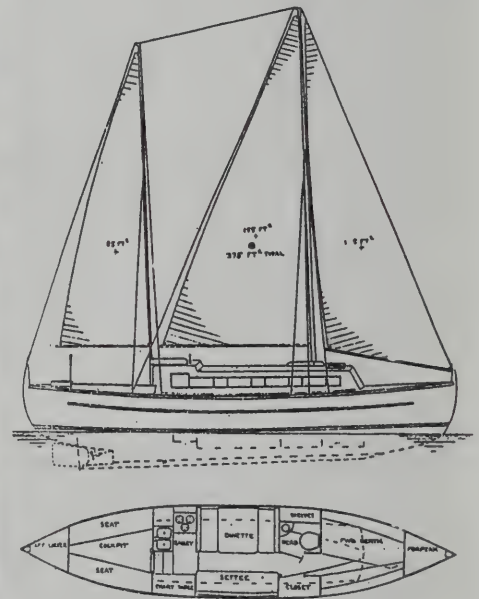
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## Biggest Trailerboat?

Roland Anderson of Poulsbo, Washington, does his trailer boating in a 34' ketch he designed and built. The 8' beam makes it towable legally over the road and the 5,000 pound weight makes it towable physically. Roland uses what appears to be a four-wheel drive carryall type station wagon. He sent the plan views but did not elaborate on construction other than to say it's built of plywood and has a full 6' headroom in the roomy cabin. The launching photos were photocopies so the clarity suffers somewhat, but they demonstrate that the boat indeed is trailerable.



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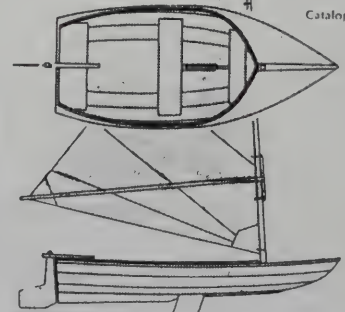
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## There's nothing new...

Ralph King of Tallahassee, Florida, designed and is marketing plans for a slotted type rudder modification for small craft which serves to improve the smooth flow of water past the rudder at the larger angles the rudder takes when turning or holding on against a weather helm. We had some details on it in the November 15, 1987 issue. Ralph had applied for a patent for his concept, but like so many such "new" inventions, his was one already patented, in Belgium in 1957. Ralph sent along the drawings from that patent application. While there are no explanatory details, you might find the selection of double and triple slotted and hinged rudders to have some intriguing possibilities.

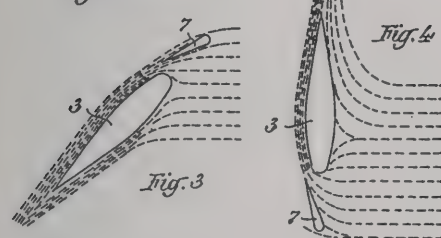
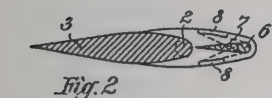
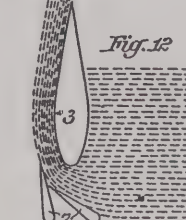
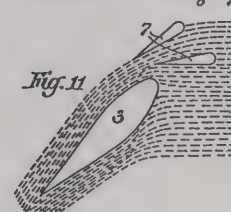
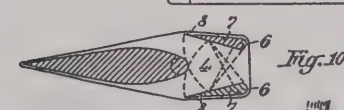
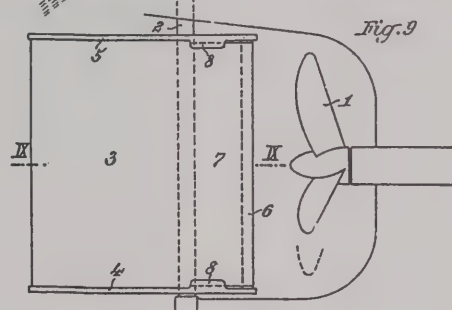
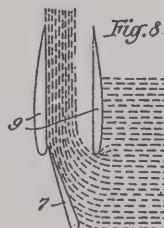
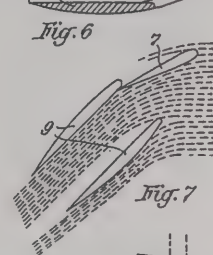
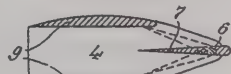
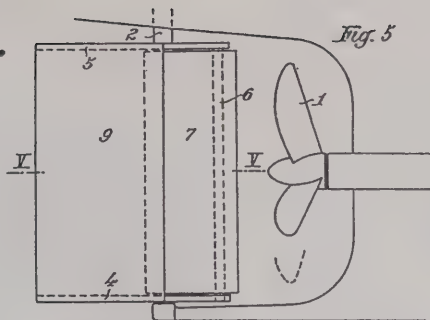
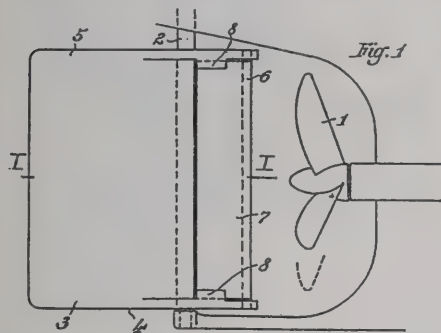


Fig. 4

Fig. 3

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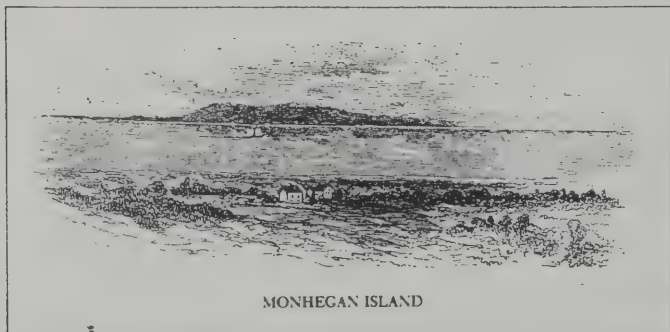


THE ISLAND OF MONHEGAN  
OWL'S HEAD  
FLAT BURGLARY

The breeze freshened as we gained the open sea, and though the swell was very rough from the recent storm, we swept along delightfully through a host of islands, fair to look upon, though not possessing the romantic beauty of the isles of Casco Bay. This part of the coast of Maine is interesting from its legendary and historical associations. We passed in the course of the forenoon the Island of Monhegan, which comprises a thousand acres of good land, well cultivated by about a hundred inhabitants, a remarkably intelligent and prosperous people, who form a pure democracy and manage their public business entirely without officers of any kind, their only public edifice being a school-house, which serves on Sundays for a church.

Close to Monhegan is an islet called Mananas, on a rocky ledge, in the center of which was discovered in 1808 an inscription in characters supposed to be Runic. If the Vinland of the Norsemen was in New England, there can be no doubt that those bold searovers must have lingered long and lovingly on this coast of Maine, which so much resembles that of their own Norway, with its deep fiords, its rocky isles, and its sea-washed mountains. At all events, it pleased my fancy to imagine the adventurous Biorn and his companions sailing along the track we were pursuing, gazing with wondering eyes on the same islands and headlands, unchanged in any material aspect by the lapse of a thousand years.

The earliest attempts of the English at colonizing New England were made here early in the



MONHEGAN ISLAND

seventeenth century by Sir Ferdinando Gorges. Captain John Smith visited Monhegan in 1614, and a settlement was made on the island in 1618, two years before the Pilgrims arrived at Plymouth. A little farther to the eastward, on the island of Mount Desert, the mission of St. Saviour had been founded



## CARTER'S COAST OF NEW ENGLAND

Being an account of a cruise from  
Provincetown to Bar Harbor in the  
summer of 1858, newly abridged and  
illustrated for readers of  
a later generation

in 1613 by the French Jesuit, Father Pierre Baird, and destroyed, together with other French settlements in Maine, by Sir Samuel Argal of Virginia. At a later period, the adventurous Baron de St. Castine came from Canada and built a fortress on the site of the town which now bears his name. He married the daughter of the great Modocawando, the most powerful sachem of the East, and had a wild and romantic career till his castle was taken and plundered by Sir Edmund Andros, Governor of Massachusetts.

The breeze being fair and steady, we held on our course without stopping, till, at 6 p.m., we reached Owl's Head, an exceedingly picturesque promontory where a large white lighthouse crowned a high rock rising abruptly from the water. Here we anchored in a broad channel between the mainland and two islands, amid a fleet of vessels. This channel is much frequented by coasters and fishermen, and five hundred sails have been seen passing Owl's Head in one day.

After supper the Assyrian persuaded the Artist and me to go ashore and walk with him to the large





OWL'S HEAD

town of Rockland, where he was assured by the Skipper that whiskey could be obtained without fail. To make a proper impression on the people of that place, he arrayed himself in his best attire, putting on a fashionable stove-pipe hat which he had carefully reserved for a great emergency. In spite of his pleadings, we wore our red shirts, fishy trousers, and old felt hats, and consequently made rather a rowdy appearance by the side of the Assyrian.

We set off at a good pace. The distance to Rockland, according to the Skipper, being only three miles, and the weather fine though growing cold, we were highly pleased at the prospect of stretching our legs after being cramped up in the little sloop. We went on cheerfully for perhaps a couple of miles, on a road bordered by woods, till we met a man driving a wagon on his way to Owl's Head. We stopped and asked:

"Is this the road to Rockland?"

"Wal, it is."

"How far is it?"

"Wal, a little mor'n three miles."

The wagoner drove on, leaving us not very well satisfied. We kept on, however, for about a mile farther, where we encountered a traveller on foot who assured us that Rockland was still about three miles distant. The distance was evidently diminishing, and we pushed vigorously onward, till at length, after walking about five miles, we reached the town of which we were in search, about 9 p.m. To our surprise, it proved to be a handsome, city-like place, with well-built brick blocks and granite sidewalks. The whole population appeared to be in the street, returning, as we learned, from a brass-band concert.

The Assyrian directed his steps to a hotel, where he asked about the fluid resources of the town. The

answer was discouraging. Nothing stronger than beer was to be had for love or money. Unwilling to credit so fearful a state of destitution in a place of such size and apparent business, our thirsty friend went forth to explore, leaving us to read the newspapers and gather the news of the last few weeks. In about half an hour he returned tolerably successful. He had found, at a druggists', several bottles of Wolfe's Aromatic Schiedam Schnapps, which, in spite of its pretensions to be medicine, he said was really a pretty good article of gin, though abominably diluted with water. Still, it was fit for drink, and, in the absence of better liquor, might be endured.

We set out at once on our return, each alternately bearing the precious package; which was confoundedly heavy. We reached Owl's Head just at midnight, scarcely able to stand, we were so fatigued from want of practice in walking. The weather had changed greatly in the course of the evening. It had grown quite cold, and the clouds indicated speedy rain. With some difficulty we detected the Helen amid a crowd of vessels of all sizes. The Assyrian hailed her:

"Hallo! the Helen, the Helen ahoy!"

There was no response. In fact, all on board were sound asleep, having turned in under the impression that we should stay at Rockland all night. The Assyrian hailed again repeatedly, and with the utmost force of his lungs, and we joined him in the outcry. There was still no answer from the sloop, but men on board other vessels halloed at us in wrath for making such a disturbance, and dogs on the shore set up a furious barking. There was evidently no use in attempting to rouse our sleeping friends. We walked about the village for a while, seeking a tavern. None was to be seen. At length, growing desperate with fatigue and cold, we tried to raise the inmates of several dwellings in succession, but without effect; we could not waken a soul. There must be something peculiarly sleep-provoking in the atmosphere of Owl's Head, for we made din enough to rouse the dead.

Our next effort was in search of a boat. We prowled in the dark and the rain for some distance along the shore. We found only two skiffs, one of which was full of water, and the other was moored beyond our reach except by swimming. We turned again to the village, and found at length a ruinous cooper-shop, in which we took refuge from the rain, and made an attempt to sleep. With a stick of wood for a pillow, we lay down on a pile of shavings, and for a few minutes slumbered; but the cold wind blew so keenly through the chasms in the walls of



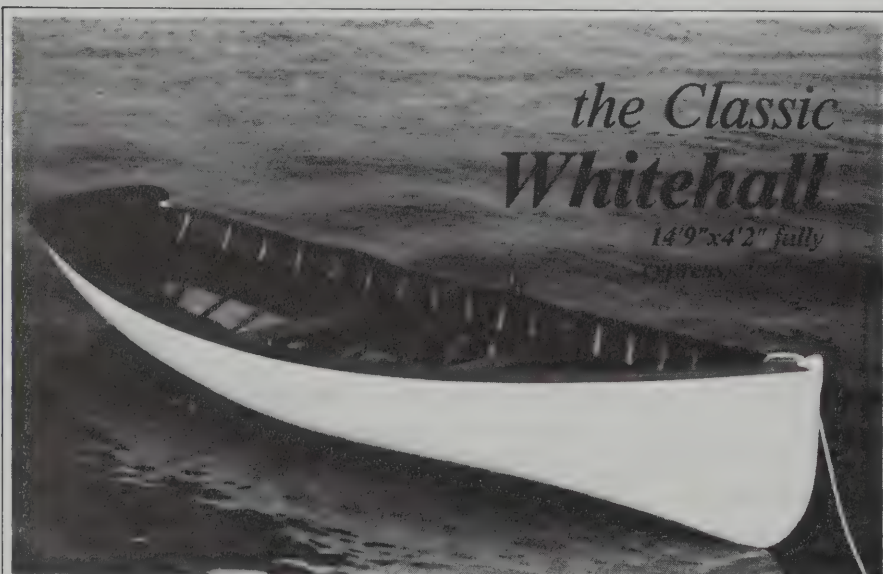
the hut, that we soon woke, and were forced to rise and move about to keep warm. At length it occurred to me that the schoolhouse of the village would probably afford us a comfortable shelter, if we could find it. We remembered enough of the feats of our schoolboy days to be confident that we could get into any building of the sort in New England.

As the rain had somewhat abated, we sallied forth and happily in a few minutes found the building which we sought — a house of one story with a single chimney, windows high above the ground, and no fence around it. After scouting it carefully, we assisted the Assyrian to clamber up to a window which had fortunately been left a little open. That gentleman, after much effort, at last got his knee upon the windowsill, and, pushing up the sash, thrust in his head.

At this moment two or three quick screams and outcries — “Thieves! murder! help!” — evidently from a female voice — broke upon our horrified ears. They were followed by a rough voice demanding with an oath what we wanted. It was no time for explanations. And in fact none were needed

by us. We had mistaken a dwelling for a schoolhouse, and were breaking into a bedroom — that was all. The Assyrian let go the sash, which, in its descent, struck off his new hat, which fell of course within the room. He then dropped himself to the ground, and we all ran away as fast as we could.

We again took refuge in the cooper’s shop, congratulating ourselves that it was not the fashion on the coast of Maine to sleep with pistols under the pillow, and wondering at the taste which led people to build their dwellings in the same fashion that they did their schoolhouses. We made another attempt to sleep in the shavings, but the cold still kept us awake. We therefore descended to the shore again, and, after long walking on the beach, found a boat with oars, which some fisherman had left ready to go out in to his daily task at dawn. We took the liberty of borrowing it, and were soon on board the sloop. Stopping merely to wake the Skipper and send him back with the borrowed boat, we turned into our berths, and, wrapped in warm blankets, were soon oblivious of all our troubles.



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# Notes on River Sailing

From an early '30's issue of RUDDER magazine.

THE phenomenal growth of small one-design center-board classes during the past few years is due to many factors, not the least important of which is the fact that these little boats may be raced nearly any place where there is sufficient water area to lay out a three or four mile triangular or dog-leg course. This fact has given rise to a great deal of highly competitive and well-organized racing all over the country on rivers which are wholly or partially unsuitable for navigation by larger boats.

In river sailing we are confronted with a somewhat complex set of conditions. Usually, there is a natural down-stream current which is accelerated when the tide ebbs, and is diminished, or even reversed, when the tide floods. Also, due to the inland character of river sailing, the wind is invariably shifting and uncertain. These various factors must all be properly allowed for by the river sailor if he is to sail successfully.

Assuming a windward start when racing, it is of course desirable to time your start accurately, but this is not absolutely essential. The important point in a river start is to *get the windward spot*—waste a few seconds if necessary but keep "on top" of the crowd at the start. This places you in the enviable position of being the only boat in the fleet which can take immediate and full advantage of a wind-shift. If the shift is a favoring one you will be still farther to windward of the fleet than at first. If the shift heads you, you are the only boat which can go about instantly without fear of collision with another boat.

So much for the start. In sailing a windward leg, with a favoring tide, you must often decide whether to play the current or the wind, and a proper decision here is very difficult to make. If, however, you are bucking the current, it is invariably best to keep close inshore, where the current moves more slowly. Usually, one shore is better than the other, and I have found, in nine cases out of ten, that the shallower side is better. (This is due to the fact that shallows are nearly always the result of silting caused by retarded current movement.)

In fact you can almost make it a rule to work the shallows when practicable if bucking the current in a light or falling wind, no matter what leg you may be sailing. Getting back to our windward leg again and assuming you are beating up the river, another reason for staying inshore is the physical phenomenon that wind tends to blow *across* the shore line and not parallel with it. Out in the middle, the wind tends to blow up and down the river, but along the edges, a definite transverse

wind movement will invariably be noted. You have probably often noticed how the inshore boats can sail almost parallel with the shore line.

Another point to be borne in mind is that the shifting, uncertain conditions which obtain in river sailing make it rather difficult to cover an opponent successfully. Merely staying on his wind will not suffice. A wind shift might well allow him to lay the mark with his air clear and leave you overstanding. If splitting tacks will keep you more nearly between your opponent and the mark, it is far better to go about than to try to keep him covered under your lee.

In laying for the mark on your windward leg, the set of the current must of course be considered—laying well to windward bucking the current and holding to the lee if the current is favoring.

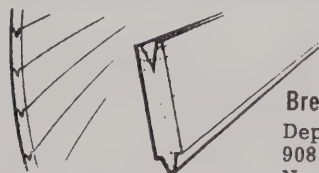
A reaching leg on a river is sailed similarly to a reach on open water except that it is very risky to work too far off that imaginary line connecting two marks of the course. This is due to the vagaries of a river wind, which is apt to shift around, leaving you stranded with a beat instead of a reach. An exception to this is in very, very light air, in which case it is best to work your boat out to windward, where you will get the puffs first and hold them longer. So much for reaching.

Running before the wind is a very interesting leg when sailing on rivers, due to the often constant shifting of wind through an arc of four points (45 degrees) or more. I have found it best to sail this leg with one eye glued to the masthead fly, so as to favor each wind shift with the helm. If the wind actually blows "by the lee"—(from the same side on which the boom is), gybe immediately and get your sails "working" again. A well-sailed boat may gybe as many as ten or fifteen times on a down-wind run in light, fluky air. Incidentally, gybing requires a high degree of coordination between skipper and crew and this maneuver should be carefully practiced by river sailors.

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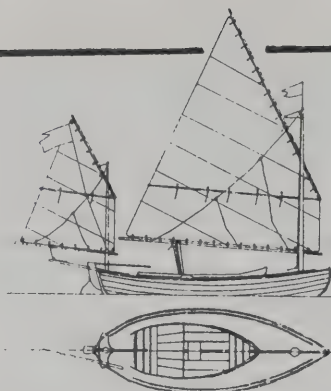


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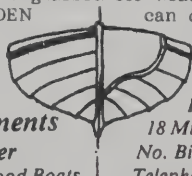
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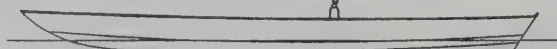
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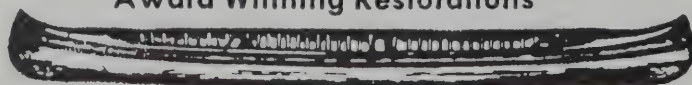
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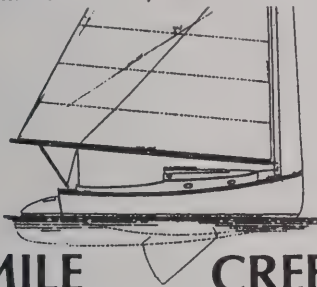
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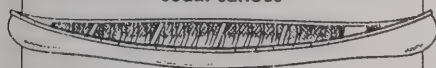


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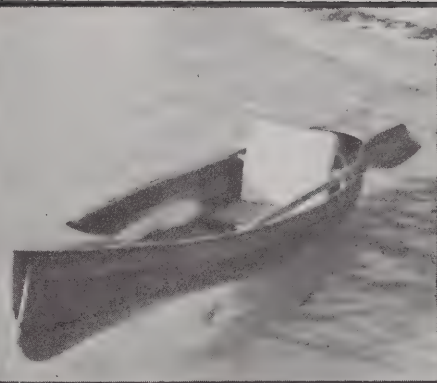
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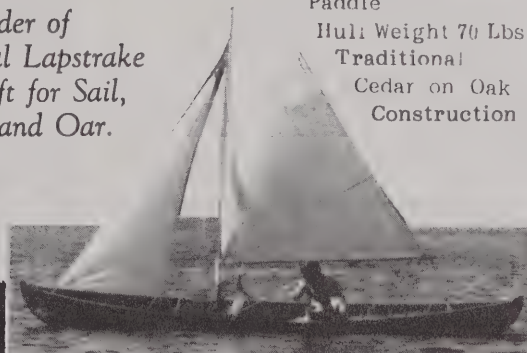
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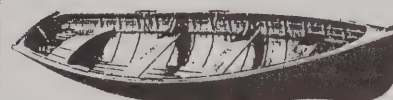
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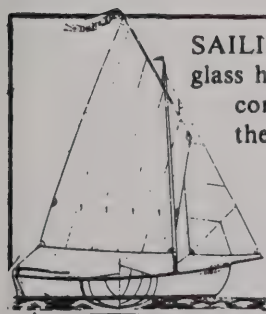
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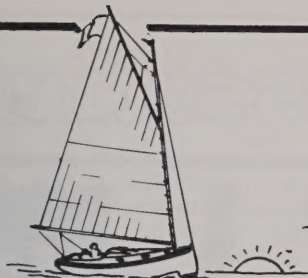
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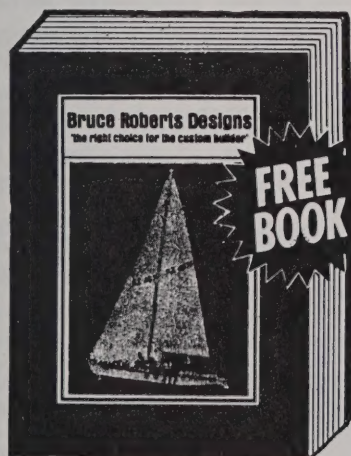
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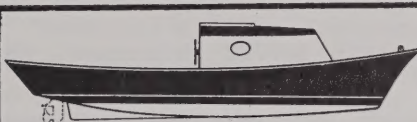
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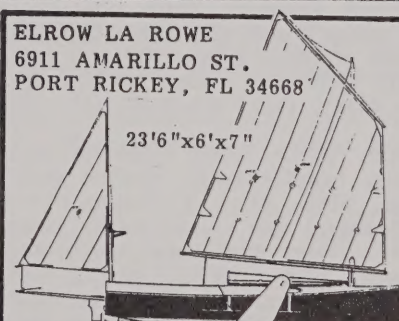
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SOLO CANOES. 16'6" Mad River Fingerling, like new, \$575. 13'4" Mad River Pearl, free style, \$625. 15'6" We-no-nah Solitude, \$540.  
BILL ZELLER, Dunbarton., NH. (603) 774-4240. (2)

13' BUTTERNUT CANOE, Culler design cedar on oak, built 1970, good condition. With sprit sail. \$600 O.B.O.  
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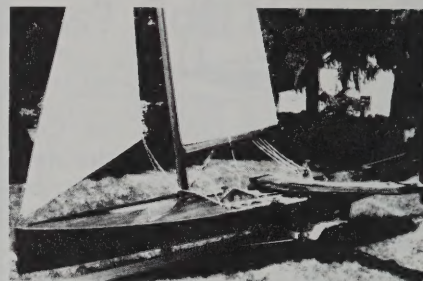
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RON MIDGETT, Easthampton, MA, (413) 527-8033. (2)

JULIEN 'CANOE FRANCAIS' Rec-Racer rowing shell, new and unused. List price \$1,755. Custom carbon-fiber lightweight sculls (oars). List price \$300. Total value \$2,055. Asking \$1,600. This 21.5' rowing shell is the fastest recreational shell available today. Easily handled, excellent performance.  
DR. ROBERT ROSS, Mansfield, MA, (617) 339-5639. (2)

26' DART, 1928, totally restored mahogany speedboat. Located Lake Winnepesaukee. Asking \$30,000.  
POWELL, RR1, Wolfeboro, NH 03894, or call Cole-Powell at (203) 348-6590. (3)

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21' SAWYER SABRE CANOE, kevlar classic. Fastest kid on the block. Excellent condition, \$400.  
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TOM ARDITO, Mulberry Farm, Guilford, CT 06437, (203) 453-0442. (TF)

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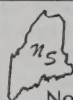
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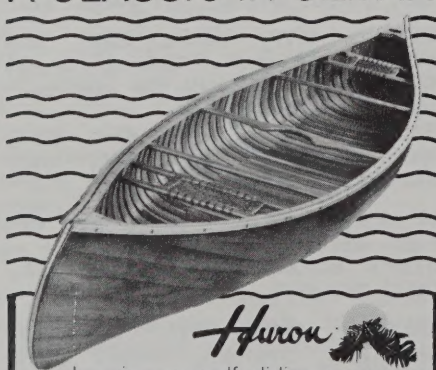
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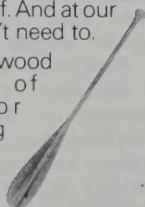
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